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RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHBK #0349/01 0190935
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 190935Z JAN 06
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5736
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 000349

SIPDIS

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PASS TO MR. VU LE, ISN ECC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR DR. SCOTT JONES AND DR.
JAMES HOLMES

[1](#)1. (U) POST WELCOMES AND GRANTS COUNTRY CLEARANCE TO DR.
JAMES HOLMES AND DR. SCOTT JONES.

- DR. JONES ARRIVES NORTHWEST FLIGHT 27 AT 0005 JANUARY 21, 2006
- DR. JONES DEPARTS NORTHWEST FLIGHT 28 AT 0600 JANUARY 28, 2006
- DR. HOLMES ARRIVES AMERICAN FLIGHT 6106 AT 1050 JANUARY 23, 2006
- DR. HOLMES DEPARTS NORTHWEST FLIGHT 28 AT 0600 JANUARY 28, 2006

[1](#)2. (U) PER DIEM IN BANGKOK IS \$125 FOR HOTEL AND \$57 FOR M&IE. HOTEL RESERVATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AS REQUESTED.

[1](#)3. (U) DUE TO LIMITED RESOURCES AND EASY AVAILABILITY OF AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION, POST POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW FOR AIRPORT MEET AND ASSIST. THAI AIRWAYS LIMOUSINE SERVICE AND AMERICAN EXPRESS AIRPORT TAXI ARE RECOMMENDED FOR PERSONS UNFAMILIAR WITH BANGKOK. THESE SERVICES ARE LOCATED INSIDE THE ARRIVAL HALL, WHICH YOU ENTER AFTER CLEARING CUSTOMS. THE COST OF A ONE-WAY TRIP VARIES FROM 700 TO 1500 BAHT, DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF VEHICLE, FIGURE IN ANOTHER 70 BAHT FOR EXPRESSWAY TOLLS. REGULAR TAXIS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AND COST APPROXIMATELY 225 BAHT, NOT INCLUDING TOLLS, AND A TAXI AIRPORT SURCHARGE OF 50 BAHT. CURRENTLY, THE THAI BAHT IS APPROXIMATELY 40/DOLLAR.

[1](#)4. (U) EMBASSY POINT OF CONTACT IS POLITICAL OFFICER, ANTHONY TRANCHINA. OFFICE NUMBER IS 662-205-4148, OFFICE FAX IS 662-253-3876 AND MOBILE NUMBER IS 661-909-8235. THE AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY NUMBER FOR THE EMBASSY IS 662-205-4108. FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHEDULING, PLEASE CONTACT MR. TRANCHINA IN BANGKOK OR MR. VU LE AT MAIN STATE.

[1](#)5. (U) ALTHOUGH VISAS ARE NOT REQUIRED OF HOLDERS OF U.S. PASSPORTS (WHETHER DIPLOMATIC, OFFICIAL OR TOURIST) WHO PLAN TO STAY FEWER THAN 30 DAYS, POST NONETHELESS RECOMMENDS THAT TDY TRAVELERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE STAYING FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS OR LONGER, OBTAIN AN OFFICIAL VISA BEFORE COMING TO THAILAND. IF FOR WHATEVER REASON THE TRAVELER HAS TO EXTEND THE STAY, IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO EXTEND A 30-DAY TOURIST VISA OBTAINED AT THE AIRPORT; AND FINES FOR OVERSTAYS ARE COSTLY.

[1](#)6. (U) THAILAND HAS AN AIRPORT DEPARTURE TAX OF 500 BAHT THAT MUST BE PAID IN LOCAL CURRENCY UPON DEPARTURE.

[1](#)7. (U) CRIME:

- CRIME IS GENERALLY NON-CONFRONTATIONAL IN NATURE. CRIMINAL ACTS ARE USUALLY CRIMES OF OPPORTUNITY SUCH AS PURSE-SNATCHINGS, THEFTS OF UNATTENDED PROPERTY, AND PICK POCKETING. VISITORS SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY ALERT IN CROWDED BUSES, STREETS, AND MARKETS OR WHILE ON "TUK-TUKS." VISITORS SHOULD LOCK VALUABLES IN HOTEL SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES NOT IN

THEIR HOTEL ROOMS.

- BE AWARE OF COMMON SCAMS AND FRAUDS (INCLUDING CREDIT CARDS, IN PARTICULAR). VISITORS SHOULD ONLY USE CREDIT CARDS AT WELL-ESTABLISHED AND REPUTABLE BUSINESSES. VISITORS SHOULD BE CAREFUL WHEN PURCHASING BRANDED OR COPYRIGHTED GOODS. THERE ARE MANY PIRATED COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS IN THE MARKETPLACE; THEIR PURCHASE IS AGAINST POST REGULATIONS AND IT IS ILLEGAL TO IMPORT THESE PRODUCTS INTO THE U.S. BE WARY OF COMMON SCAMS FOR JEWELRY, SUITS, SILKS, GEMS, OR ANTIQUITIES. THERE ARE NO THAI GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR SPONSORED GEM STORES. IF VICTIMIZED, SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM TOURIST POLICE BY DIALING 1155.

- VISITORS ARE CAUTIONED FROM VISITING BARS INVOLVED IN THE SEX TRADE. MANY OF THESE OPERATE ILLEGALLY AND CLIENTS CAN BE SUBJECT TO RTG LAW; THEY OFTEN CHARGE EXORBITANT DRINK PRICES AND COVER CHARGES. THERE ARE ALSO MANY INCIDENTS OF CRIME AGAINST PATRONS IN THESE ESTABLISHMENTS. DRUGGING AND ROBBING OF UNWARY INDIVIDUALS IS NOT UNCOMMON. THERE ARE FREQUENT REPORTS OF VICTIMS BEING DRUGGED AND ROBBED OR BEATEN WHEN VISITING THESE BARS. THE DRUGS USED CAN CAUSE SERIOUS TEMPORARY MEMORY IMPAIRMENT, UNCONSCIOUSNESS, AND IF OVERDOSED, DEATH.

18. (U) TRAFFIC AND OTHER SECURITY TIPS

- THE TRAFFIC SITUATION IN BANGKOK CAN BE DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS FOR BOTH PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLE OCCUPANTS. ALL VISITORS SHOULD BE ALERT TO TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND UNEXPECTED MOTORCYCLE DRIVERS. TRAFFIC DRIVES ON THE LEFT-HAND SIDE, OPPOSITE FROM THE U.S., ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE A BUS LANE THAT FLOWS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. PEDESTRIANS SHOULD USE THE OVERHEAD WALKWAYS FOR CROSSING BUSY STREETS.

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- VISITORS SHOULD AVOID MAKING ANY PEJORATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT ANY MEMBERS OF THE THAI ROYAL FAMILY OR ENGAGING IN DISRESPECTFUL CONDUCT WITHIN TEMPLES OR TOWARD RELIGIOUS OBJECTS. SUCH BEHAVIOR CAN RESULT IN ARREST AND/OR EXPULSION FROM THAILAND.

- VISITORS SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET FOR THAILAND AND THE MOST RECENT WORLDWIDE CAUTION PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE VIA THE INTERNET AT <http://travel.state.gov>.

19. (U) IN ESSENCE, VISITORS TO BANGKOK MUST EXERCISE APPROPRIATE CAUTION AND BE ALERT TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS WITH REGARD TO THEIR PERSONAL SECURITY. SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS/ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE REPORTED TO RSO BANGKOK (TEL. 02-205-4000, 24 hrs/day). ON BEHALF OF US EMBASSY BANGKOK, WE HOPE YOU HAVE A SAFE AND PLEASANT TRIP.
ARVIZU